

ACCESS LETTER

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Fleet Bank and Disability Law Center Unveil Talking ATMs

On February 28th, Fleet Bank and Boston-based Disability Law Center (DLC) announced a plan to ensure that people with vision impairments can access ATMs and other banking services. The plan includes installation of the first "talking ATMs" in New England, a program to enhance access to printed materials, and improved Web site accessibility.

Equipped with universal headset jacks, more than 16 talking ATMs are already installed in Fleet branches in Massachusetts. In Cambridge, talking ATMs have been installed at 28 Elliot Street in Harvard Square and 727 Mass Ave. in Central Square.

"We are very excited that Fleet has so enthusiastically demonstrated its commitment to improving accessibility for blind and visually impaired people, and we applaud their efforts," said Kim Charlson, a representative of the Bay State Council of the Blind, who has been actively involved in the initiative announced today. Over the next two years, Fleet will install over 1,400 talking ATMs throughout the Northeast, from Maine to Pennsylvania.

"With today's announcement, Fleet is taking a leadership role within the banking industry," said Disability Law Center Managing Attorney Stanley J. Eichner. "We hope that other financial institutions follow in Fleet's footsteps."

Legislature Considers Bill to Strengthen State Access Law

Last month, the Committee on Public Safety of the state legislature held a public hearing on a bill to bring state Architectural Access Board (AAB) regulations into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. On behalf of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Michael Muehe urged lawmakers to approve the legislation, House Bill No. 137. Muehe testified that the bill would amend the AAB statute to cover "employee-only" areas, thus achieving conformance with ADA requirements. As currently written, the AAB law exempts areas within a facility that are only open to employees of that facility.

Jane Perlov, Secretary of the Executive Office of Public Safety, introduced the accessibility bill to the Committee on Public Safety. Also testifying in support of the access legislation were representatives from other disability advocacy groups, including the Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled, the Massachusetts Office on Disability, and MetroWest Center for Independent Living. Advocates stressed that the bill would not cost building owners any additional money; it would instead synchronize ADA

and AAB requirements.

Passage of this legislation will also set the stage for the AAB to submit its regulation to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) for "equivilancy certification." DOJ can certify that state building codes meet or exceed the ADA's accessibility standards for new construction and alterations. Certification will facilitate voluntary compliance with accessibility requirements by having both ADA and AAB access standards in a single, readily available document. Also, builders and contractors will be able to rely on their local building inspection process and local permit approval process and will help ensure that accessibility are routinely considered in those processes.

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

through Mar.17>

Self & Other, exhibition of works by artists from Gateway Crafts, a Vinfen art and studio program for adults with disabilities, at the Gateway Gallery, 62 Harvard Street in Brookline Village, Mon.-Fri. 9-4:30, Sat. 12-5.

March 6-7

Job Development for People with Significant Psychiatric Disabilities Two-day training (9 - 4 each day) at Sheraton Commander Hotel in Cambridge. In addition to specific issues related to psychiatric disabilities, workshop will focus on job development, career planning and counseling, marketing and disclosure. Presented by Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI). Registration deadline is 3 weeks prior to workshop; cost is \$110. Contact Evelyn Reyes, ICI, Children's Hospital in Boston: 617-355-5371 voice, 355-6956 TTY, or reyes_e@tch.harvard.edu

March 7

23rd Annual LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION sponsored by Developmental Disabilities Council and Arc Massachusetts, Grand Staircase, State House, Boston, 10:30 a.m.- 1 p.m. This is a good time to meet other advocates and visit your state senators and representatives about priority bills & budget issues affecting of people with disabilities.

March 7

Providing and Accessing Reasonable Accommodations for People with Psychiatric or Mental Disabilities, Alcohol or Drug Addictions, and HIV/AIDS in Public and Assisted Housing, a seminar for Housing Providers, Service Providers and Residents. At the Massachusetts Archives & Commonwealth Museum, 220 Morrissey Blvd. in Boston, 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. *Register by Jan. 12*. Fee of \$45 covers breakfast, lunch and handbook. Scholarships are available to consumers who need them. For more information contact Helena Padellaro at 617-854-1077 voice or 617-854-1025 TTY.

March 7-8

Community Access Monitor Training in Winchester, presented by the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) at Winchester Town Hall, 71 Mount Vernon Street. Learn how to help your community become more accessible. The two days of training will cover the regulations of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design and hands-on practice taking measurements during site surveys. Cost is \$15 for consumers, \$75 for professionals; lunch on both days is included. Registration DEADLINE is Feb. 26 if you are requesting accommodations (large print, Braille, sign language interpreters), otherwise

March 1. For more information, contact MOD at 617-727-7440 voice/TTY or 800-322-2020 voice/TTY. This is a scent free event; please do NOT wear perfume, after-shave, cologne, etc. This **Training** will be repeated around the state at various places:

- April 17-18 - Bourne
- May 16-17 - Andover
- June 6-7 - Dedham
- Sept. 25-26 - Worcester
- Oct. 24-25 - Abington
- **Nov. 13-14 - Cambridge**, hosted by CCPD

March 8

CCPD Monthly Meeting - 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor conference room, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

March 9

Permanent CLOSING DATE for applications to the Pharmacy Program or Pharmacy Program Plus. If you are under 65, have a qualified disability and are not eligible for Mass Health, you may be eligible for prescription drug benefits under the new Prescription Advantage program. But to be grandfathered into this program, you must be enrolled in one of the current programs by 3/31/01. The deadline for these completed applications, with all necessary verifications is Friday, March 9. These programs are administered by the Mass. Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA). For information contact them at 1-800-243-4636 voice or 1-800-872-0166 TTY.

March 17

Maximizing Our Children's Future, a conference for families of children with special needs and the professional who serve them at the World Trade Center in Boston, 8 a.m. - 4:15 p.m. Sponsored by Federation for Children with Special Needs, Parent Professional Advocacy League, Family TIES of Mass. and Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change. Get up-to-date information on education reform, visit Interactive Technology Exhibit, and choose from 30 workshops - some in Spanish and Portuguese. Register online at www.fcsn.org or call 617-236-7210, ext.199. Fee is \$40; limited scholarships are available.

March 20

Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) monthly meeting, 1 - 3 p.m. at the State House, Boston. For more information call Robert Snierson, Chair, at 617-338-6665 voice / 338-6662/TTY

March 21

Regional Meeting for local Disability Commissions sponsored by Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) and hosted by the Acton Commission on Disabilities in the Acton Memorial Library, 1-4 p.m. Program will include a status report on various disability-related bills pending before the State Legislature and a time to hear from each commission present. **RSVP** by March 16th (March 12th if you are requesting any accommodation) to Jeffrey Dougan at 617-727-7440 voice/tty or Jeff.Dougan@modi.state.ma.us

March 21

Career Expo 2001 JOB FAIR sponsored by Nashua Telegraph and Franklin Pierce College at the Nashua Marriott, Nashua, NH. From 11:30 a.m. until 7 p.m.

Mar. 27-28

Beyond Traditional Job Development: Ways of Partnering with Business, Two-day training (9 am - 4 pm each day) in Worcester. Attendees will learn how to enhance traditional networking strategies, develop long-term employer relationships, expand roles for employers in program services. Registration deadline is 3 weeks prior to workshop; cost is \$110. Contact Evelyn Reyes, ICI, Children's Hospital in Boston: 617-355-5371 voice, 355-6956 TTY, or reyes_e@tch.harvard.edu

March 28

Creating Community Connections: Policy & Practice Updates Concerning Elders and People with Disabilities in Housing - conference in Worcester from 9 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Sponsored by Mass. Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) and Tenant Assistance Program and others. Registration fees: \$25 - \$60; DEADLINE is March 15. Contact Denise Green for more information or to request accommodations: 617-854-1080 voice, 617-854-1025 TDD, 617-854-1028 Fax.

March 28

Job Fair at MIT in Stratton Building Student Center, sponsored by Job Developers Networking Group, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Contact Colleen O'Mara at 617-355-7388 for more information.

March 29

American JOB FAIRS at Executive Conference Hall, Bayside Expo Center, 150 Mount Vernon St. in Boston, 9:30 a.m. until 4 p.m.

March 31

South Shore Chamber of Commerce JOB FAIR in North Quincy from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at State Street Corporation in the Quincy Adams Building, 1776 Heritage Dr.

April 2

New AREA CODES for Eastern Massachusetts & 10 digit dialing go into effect. Reprogram your automatic dialers, call forwarding, call block, cellular phones, fax machines, modems, pagers, security system, and speed dialing or else they will not work. For more information call 1-877-554-3685 or contact www.verizon.com/support/areacode.html>

April 12

CCPD Monthly Meeting - 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor conference room, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

April 17

Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) monthly meeting, 1 - 3 p.m. at the State House, Boston. For more information call Robert Snierson, Chair, at 617-338-6665 voice / 338-6662 TTY.

April 24

Career Fair for Individuals with Disabilities at University of Massachusetts Lowell, North Cummnock Hall from 12-4 p.m. Sponsored by the Northeast Business Advisor Committee of The Resource Partnership. For more information, log onto www.resourcepartnership.org/bb.html

May 1

Job Accommodations for People with Disabilities, one day training from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Holy Cross campus in Worcester presents overview of broad range of accommodations, legal and practical realities. Registration deadline is 3 weeks prior to workshop; cost is \$75. Contact Evelyn Reyes, ICI, Children's

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